

Application No.: 09/926,357

Amendment Under 37 C.F.R. §1.111 dated October 14, 2003

Response to the Office Action of July 14, 2003

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

No claim amendments have been made. Therefore, claims 1 – 14 remain pending in the present application. No new matter has been added. It is therefore believed that this Amendment is fully responsive to the Office Action dated July 14, 2003.

Drawings

In item 1 of the Action, the drawings stand objected to due to the Examiner's assertion that Figs. 15 and 16 must be labeled as "Prior Art."

Accordingly, Figures 15 and 16 have each been amended as determined by the Examiner to recite "Prior Art." Therefore, withdrawal of this objection to the drawings is respectfully solicited.

As to the Merits

As to the merits of this case, the Examiner sets forth the following rejection:

claims 1 - 14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Takahashi (U.S. Patent No. 6,097,202).

This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Independent claims 1, 11 and 14 each call for *each of said sensor elements includes; a passive element operable as a counter electrode coupled capacitively with said conductive*

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pattern to detect the potential variation in said conductive pattern, and a transistor adapted to output a detect signal in response to said select signal which is input into said transistor, said detect signal being output from said passive element.

Similarly, independent claim 12 calls for *each of said sensor elements includes; a passive element operable as a counter electrode coupled capacitively with said conductive pattern to detect the potential variation of said conductive pattern, and a transistor adapted to output said detect signal in response to said select signal which is input into said transistor, said detect signal corresponding to the potential variation detected by said passive element.*

With regard to these features, the Examiner contends that Takahashi discloses:

each of said sensor elements (52, 54, 56, 58) includes; a passive element (figs 2, 3A and 3B) operable as a counter electrode coupled capacitively with said conductive pattern (34) to detect the potential variation in said conductive pattern (34), and a transistor (SW2) adapted to output a detect signal in response to said select signal which is input into said transistor (SW2), said detect signal being output from said passive element.^{1/}

However, the Examiner is mis-characterizing the teachings of Takahashi, since the sensor module 50 and its sensor units 52, 54, 56 and 58 of Takahashi fail to include a transistor adapted to output a detect signal in response to the select signal which is input into the transistor, the detect signal being output from the passive element.

^{1/}Please see, lines 6 - 12, page3 of the Action.

More specifically, switch SW2 does not constitute a part of the sensor module 50 or its sensors 52, 54, 56 and 58. Instead, according to Takahashi:

The sensor module 50 is coupled to the pad section 38 to obtain a signal from the pad section 38 and to supply it to a switch section SW2, a second switch means. The module 50 comprises a four sensor units 52, 54, 56, and 58 integrally formed as shown in FIGS. 2, 3A and 3B.^{1/}

Based on the transmitted signal, the computer 44 determines the continuity of a printed pattern selected by the switch sections SW1 and SW2 (in the above example, the printed pattern 34a). The computer 44, the signal source 46, and the signal detection section 48 constitute a controller 42.^{1/}

Thus, by using the switch section SW1 to select the pad 36b and using the switch section SW2 to select the sensor unit 54 in order to inspect continuity, it can be determined whether the printed pattern 34x is open-circuited between the pad 38b and the pad 38x.^{1/}

That is, from the above, it is clear that the switch sections SW1 and SW2 fail to constitute a part of the sensors and instead are used to actually select the pads and sensors, respectively, for a desired continuity test.

In other words, Takahashi fails to disclose sensor units which each include a transistor adapted to output a detect signal in response to the select signal which is input into the transistor, the detect signal being output from the passive element, as called for in each of the independent claims 1, 11, 12 and 14.

^{2/}Please see, lines 48 - 53, column 4 of Takahashi.

^{3/}Please see, lines 41 - 45, column 5 of Takahashi

^{4/}Please see, lines 53 - 57, column 5 of Takahashi

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In view of the above remarks and accompanying amendments, this application is believed to be in condition for allowance, which action is requested at an early date.

If, for any reason, it is felt that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

In the event that this paper is not timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fees for such an extension of time and any other fees which may be due with respect to this paper, to Deposit Account No. 50-2866.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Enclosures: Replacement Sheets (Figures 15 and 16)

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